

A.19 Guidelines for Interaction with Commercial Enterprises

1. Purpose of these Guidelines

To fulfil its mandate as global representative of the veterinary profession as a whole, WVA must increasingly harness support from and create sound partnerships with public bodies, civil society and commercial enterprises.

In developing partnerships with the corporate or business sector, WVA's position as an impartial body, representing veterinary science in all its aspects, must be assured and scientific validity must not be compromised.

The general principles of partnership building should be established on the basis of mutual respect, trust, transparency and shared benefit.

Partnerships should have specific aims and meet the following basic criteria:

- § The partnership should contribute to the achievement of the WVA's objectives
- § The results should be worthy of the effort involved in establishing and maintaining the partnership.
- § The partnership should enhance the WVA's 's role and image as the leading international professional organisation representing the veterinary profession and veterinary sciences on a global level.

2. Principles of Collaboration

WVA collaborates with the veterinary commercial sector in a variety of ways, including workshops, seminars, congresses, technical policy formulation meetings and development activities aimed at improving and strengthening animal health, animal welfare, veterinary public health, veterinary education and support during disaster and emergencies.

2.1 Common aims

Commercial enterprises working with the WVA, either directly or through its Technical Committees, would be expected to take cognizance of and respect WVA policies in areas such as animal welfare; animal health, including the prudent use of antibiotics; veterinary public health and food safety; ethical testing and promotion of veterinary pharmaceuticals and animal feeds and veterinary education.

Evaluation criteria will be applied by the Executive Committee of the WVA (ExCom). These criteria are similar to those already being applied by a range of public agencies in evaluating potential partnerships with the corporate sector. These factors include the occupational health conditions on which products or services are produced, the environmental commitment of the commercial enterprise, marketing and advertising practices, research and development policy and practices, regulatory compliance of the enterprise and past activities which might reflect poorly on the credibility of the WVA.

2.2 Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest is of particular concern for the WVA's work in developing veterinary public health guidance, in recommending regulatory standards and in other activities which may affect product costs, market demand, or profitability of specific veterinary goods and services. Such activities include norms for quality, safety, efficacy, promotion practices, and information provision for pharmaceuticals; diagnostic and treatment guidelines or advice which may affect the market for individual products and product categories; chemical safety standards; and animal nutritional guidelines.

To avoid conflict of interest, real or perceived:

- § WVA and its Technical Committees must ensure that the establishment of norms and standards is based on science and evidence and not on commercial interests;
- § and any interaction with commercial enterprises must be transparent and monitored by ExCom.

3. Donations (Cash or in Kind)

3.1 Suitability

Donations are acceptable from veterinary commercial enterprises, based on WVA's principles of collaboration, but not from commercial enterprises whose activities are incompatible with WVA's objectives (e. g. where animal welfare is compromised, the environment polluted, animals are abused in biomedical research etc.)

Donations are also acceptable from other commercial enterprises whose activities are unrelated to the work of WVA such as banks, insurance companies, airlines, etc., provided this would not adversely reflect on WVA.

3.2 Procedure of acceptance

Acceptance of all donations shall be approved by ExCom, placed in the Association Fund where appropriate and administered according to the provisions of Chapter 8 (Finance) of the WVA By-Laws.

3.3 Return of donations

Any donations received by the WVA and which are subsequently discovered to be outside the terms of these guidelines may be returned to the donor by the WVA.

3.4 Avoiding conflict of interest

Donations should not be sought or accepted from enterprises which have a direct commercial interest in the outcome of the project toward which they would be contributing.

Considerable caution should be exercised in accepting donations from enterprises that have an indirect interest in the outcome of the project (i.e. the activity is related to the enterprise's field of interest, without there being a conflict as referred to above).

In such event, other commercial enterprises having a similar indirect interest should be invited to contribute. In addition, it is preferable that funds from other sources are secured. The larger the proportion of the donation from any one source, the more scrutiny should be applied in avoiding the possibility of a perceived conflict of interest.

3.5 Unspecified Programme support

Subject to the provisions of these Guidelines, commercial enterprises can make un-earmarked donations to WVA. The receipt of such general support is encouraged, provided that:

- § the donation is not to be used to fund activities which are related to the commercial interests of the donor, and
- § the amount of the overall funds to be raised is not expected to be so large that the programme would become substantially dependent on such support from a single company, or group of enterprises, for its continued operations.

3.6 Development of guidelines or recommendations

In the particular case where a WVA activity is intended to produce guidelines or recommendations which are likely to be associated with the WVA as WVA Technical Policies (e. g. WVA Policy on the Prudent Use of Antibiotics), funds should not be accepted from commercial enterprises which have a direct commercial interest in the subject matter of the guidelines. With regard to commercial enterprises which do not have such a direct interest, funding must be secured from at least two sources and pooled. This is intended to try to minimize the risk that WVA policies, guidelines or recommendations are identified with a particular company.

3.7 Publications

Subject to paragraphs 3.1 and 3.4 above, donations may be accepted from commercial enterprises for meeting the cost of WVA publications. Such contributions will be acknowledged in accordance with paragraph 3.8 below. The placing of commercial advertisements in WVA publications, other than the Bulletin and the WVA Website, is subject to paragraph 3.2 above.

Advertisements in the Bulletin and on the WVA Website are subject to the provisions contained in Chapter 9 of the WVA Manual.

3.8 Acknowledgements

For reasons of transparency, contributions from commercial enterprises must be publicly acknowledged. The basic and most common approach to acknowledging contributions from commercial enterprises is to insert an acknowledgement in documentation relating to the activity concerned, including in any publication by the WVA of the results of this activity.

Acknowledgements should normally be worded along the following lines:

" The World Veterinary Association gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution of [company's name] towards [description of the outcome or activity] "

Contributors should not use the results of the WVA's work for commercial purposes or seek promotion from the fact that they have made a donation. However, contributors are entitled to make reference to donations in their official documents, such as corporate annual reports.

Anonymous donations from the corporate sector may not be accepted under any circumstances, as they conflict with the World Veterinary Association's policy of transparency.

4. Meetings

4.1 Exhibitions at WVA congresses (other than World Veterinary Congresses) and meetings

Subject to paragraphs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 above, commercial exhibits are allowed and welcome at WVA meetings and congresses.

4.2 Exhibitions at World Veterinary Congresses (WVC)

Exhibits of commercial enterprises at World Veterinary Congresses are an essential part of the general activities of such a Congress. Commercial exhibitions during a WVC are subject to the provisions of Rule 9 of Chapter 8 of the WVA Manual.

Exhibits from commercial enterprises should at all times be in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3.1 above (Suitability)

5. Use of WVA Logo

The use of the WVA logo is subject to the provisions of Chapter 7, Policy 7.2 A.3 of the WVA Manual.

6. Control

The WVA, through the Executive Committee, must maintain full control over the activity to which a cash or material contribution relates, including over the contents of any report of the activity and over whether or not this report is published or disseminated in any form (e.g. electronically), and if so, when.

